

Washington, DC - A bipartisan group of lawmakers, including New Jersey Representatives John Adler and Frank Pallone, Jr., introduced The Flexibility in Rebuilding American Fisheries Act of 2009. The legislation will bring much-needed flexibility to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2007.

"Fishing is a treasured family tradition for many residents in our area of New Jersey, and for others, it is a source of their livelihood," said Adler. "I am proud to support a bill that recognizes the needs of recreational and commercial fisherman and implements environmental practices that promote healthy fisheries."

Congressman Adler and Pallone have become increasingly concerned that the process of managing our nation's fisheries is unfair and oftentimes leads to unwarranted outcomes. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, fishery rebuilding plans must meet a rigid 10-year deadline to rebuild fishing stocks to unprecedented levels. This timetable has led to consistent cuts to some fisheries, hurting fishing communities economically.

"This legislation is the best way to rebuild our fisheries without bankrupting tackle shops, party boats and commercial fishermen," Pallone said. "We should be using sound biology and science when deciding how best to rebuild fish stocks. Unfortunately, the current process of managing our nation's fisheries is based on arbitrary deadlines set by Congress, which has continued to negatively impact fishing communities."

Adler and Pallone believe that more flexibility is needed in the process so that unrealistic quotas are not implemented to the detriment of our fishermen and New Jersey's shore economy, including comments by fisheries management experts that rebuilding requirements are too rigid and may not be the best way to manage species in diverse environments. The Congressmen pointed to the management of summer flounder quotas in recent years as an example of why this legislation is needed.